



Howard County Government News Release

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June 11, 2015

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Executive Kittleman asks residents to unite against elder abuse

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is June 15

ELLCOTT CITY, MD – June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). The Howard County Office on Aging and Police Department are combining efforts to educate the public on the warning signs of elder abuse and what to do if one suspects a person is a victim. This year's theme is "One Person. One Action. One Nation. United Against Elder Abuse."

Elder abuse refers to the intentional or neglectful acts of a caregiver or trusted individual that lead to physical, mental or financial abuse or exploitation. It can occur in the home, a nursing home or another institution providing service or care. Abuse also can occur over the phone.

"Don't assume that someone has already reported a suspicious situation. If you suspect an older adult is a victim of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect or exploitation, call 911," said Howard County Executive Allan H. Kittleman. "One person and one action can make a difference to protect our most vulnerable residents."

Elder Abuse Awareness Day seeks to educate the public about the signs of abuse or neglect including: the lack of basic hygiene, adequate food or clean and appropriate clothing; lack of critical medical aides such as glasses, medications, walkers or hearing aids; a person confined to bed or with dementia left without care; a home that is in disrepair or without adequate facilities like heating or cooling, functional plumbing and electricity; changes in behavior; or unexplained fractures, bruises, cuts, sores or burns.

To help fiduciaries, advocates, social workers, health care professionals and others identify and investigate abuse, neglect and exploitation, the Howard County Office on Aging, the Mental Health Authority and the Police Department will co-sponsor the 2nd annual "Protecting Older Adults" Elder Abuse Awareness Conference. The conference will be held on Friday, June 12 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Sheraton Columbia Town Center Hotel, 10207 Wincopin Circle, Columbia, MD 21044.

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The keynote speech, "Addressing Financial Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults" will be delivered by Phillip Marshall, author of "Broken Trust: The Brooke Astor Story". Marshall is the grandson of Brooke Astor and also an advocate for the prevention of elderly abuse. Attendees will gain an understanding of the impact of physical, mental, financial and other forms of abuse on older adult victims and learn how to partner with other agencies to better protect and advocate for vulnerable adults. For more information, call 410-313-6052 or email Ofelia Ross Ott in the Office on Aging at oross@howardcountymd.gov.

Howard County's Office of Consumer Affairs reports that County seniors are frequently targeted by sweepstakes scams, door-to-door home improvement scams and con artists who falsely claim they owe back taxes to the IRS. Residents are urged to contact the Office of Consumer Affairs about suspicious phone calls, email or solicitations at 410-313-6420 or consumer@howardcountymd.gov.

To learn more about elder abuse and how to prevent it, visit the National Center for Elder Abuse website at www.ncea.aoa.gov or the Office on Aging's website at www.howardcountyaging.org/eldersafety or contact the office at 410-313-5980 (voice/relay).

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